

MEETING: AUGUST 18, 1987

GrACE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREENVILLE ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

VOLUME: 5

NUMBER: 8

AUGUST 18, 1987

MEETING: AUGUST 18, 1987
DOORS OPEN AT 7:00 pm
GRIER MEMORIAL ARP CHURCH

WELL I HOPE EVERYONE ENJOYED
THERE VACATIONS THIS SUMMER!!

NOW THAT SUMMER IS ABOUT OVER
AND FOOTBALL SEASON IS JUST AROUND
THE CORNER, I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE
GOOD TO IDEA TO HAVE SOMETHING GET
US IN THE MOOD. SO THIS MONTH
GRAIG TOMPKINS IS GOING TO DEMO
TOUCHDOWN FOOTBALL BY ELECTRONIC
ARTS.

WE WILL ALSO HAVE KEVIN
KINGSMORE WHO IS GOING TO
TELL US WHAT'S NEW IN THE
ATARI WORLD FOR THE ST AND
THE XL AND XE. HE IS ALSO
GOING TO DEMO TWO PROGRAMS
FOR THE ST. ONE IS A GRAPHICS
PROGRAM CALLED COMPUTER EYES
AND THE OTHER IS THE NEW IBM
EMULATOR PROGRAM BY ADVANT
GARDE SYSTEMS CALL PC DITTO.

WE WILL ALSO HAVE THE DISK
LIBRARIANS TELL US ABOUT THE DISKS
OF THE MONTH.

Also we'll have the disk
librarians tell us what they have
on there disk of the month.
REMEMBER the cost is \$2.00 for 8-
bit and \$3.00 for 16-bit disks
(non members \$1.00 additional
charge)

So join us Tuesday, June 16th
at the Grier memorial ARP Church
Fellowship Hall. Meeting begins
at 7:00; program at 7:30. SEE YOU
THERE!

Donald Shockley
Vice-President

From the Prez...

For the past several years, I have had the dubious honor of being
in charge of registration for our local area soccer league. To
give you some idea how long ago, I began with the best data base
available at the time for the Atari 800, good ole DMSDB. A
couple of years later, Synfile came along which was quite an
improvement. I finally moved to the advantages of Data Perfect
for rapid sorting, great print-out options and back-up security.

Even though I have had my ST for about a year now, I still pull
out the ole 800 tank each soccer season to handle registration
instead of transferring the data over to one of the many powerful
data bases available for the ST. Every time I go through
dragging all the equipment out of the closet and start connecting
the IO cables, especially to the 850 (I had to think for a minute
what that was for), and the power supplies, I ask myself, "Why do
I do this instead of taking the time to do the whole thing on the
ST"? Possibly for one of the following reasons:

- 1) Too lazy to read doc (have you ever looked over DB-Man
doc?)
- 2) Not motivated to transfer data files...good guess.
- 3) Both of the above.

After some soul searching, I realized that there was another,
perhaps, more honest answer...its just plain FUN draggin' all the
8-bit stuff out and blowing the dust off some of the great ole
disks! Before I ever come close to loading up Data Perfect to
actually do 'business', its absolutely imperative to see how far
I can go on Jumpman, what new mazes I can design with Mr. Robot,
how long I can last before bankruptcy with Trains, what GS level
I can achieve on Kennedy Approach...or yes...if I'm really into
this...how many times I can 'grease it in' on one of the few
actual still-in-existence games of Final Flight! I have found
myself taking literally hours to finally get around to do what I
originally intended.

After each soccer season is underway, its time to pack everything
back into the closet, as the kitchen table is needed for other
things (like eating so I am told, over and over, etc.). But in
just a few months, it will be time for Spring sign-up, and once
again I will be duty-bound to pull out the 800 stuff and fire up
Data Perfect for soccer purposes, but not before seeing if I can
do better with the egg wave on Joust, or make it past the city
with Blue Max...

JOHN DISHER
PREZ

Gr.A.C.E.

The Greenville Atari Computer Enthusiasts is an independent, non-profit organization and user's group with no affiliation with Atari Corporation, or any other organization. Membership dues (family) is \$28.00 per year. Membership includes access to the club's public domain program library, subscription to the Gr.A.C.E. newsletter, and access to the club's electronic bulletin board, Amazin' Grace (803-268-8138).

The GrACE newsletter is published monthly by the Greenville Atari Computer Enthusiasts, 187 Saratoga Dr., Greer, SC 29651. Permission to reprint articles in any non-commercial publication is permitted without authorization, provided credit is given to the Greenville Atari Computer Enthusiasts and the author. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Gr.A.C.E..

The GrACE newsletter will accept any articles by members on any topic found pertinent to the club. Articles will be accepted in any form, although word processing files uploaded to the club's BBS (268-8138) with a message left to Ed Culbertson or Mike Jett, Editors, are preferred.

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

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Take a moment and look at your mailing label on this issue of the 'GrACE NEWS'. Check the right-hand side of the label for the word 'DUES'. Just after this word are the month/year when your membership expires. Try to renew at least one month early. This helps us with the accounting and record keeping and also avoids your missing any issues of the newsletter.

There are two easy ways to renew:

1. At the monthly meeting talk to Doug Slagh the club treasurer and present him with \$20 (in cash or check).
2. Send your name and renewal (\$20) to:

Doug Slagh
184 Burgoyne Court
Greer, SC 29651

CERTIFICATE MAKER UPDATE

In the June, 1987 newsletter I contributed a review of the program, Certificate Maker by Springboard.

I presented a demonstration of the program at the meeting that month as well.

Although I was generally pleased with the operation and completed product of the program, I expressed several reservations to it. In the demonstration I explained that I had not yet been able to get

different fonts to print out on separate lines in the body of the certificate as described in the documentation. I was sure that I was doing something wrong or that I had a defective copy of the program.

After the meeting, Kevin Kingsmore - from whom I bought the program - approached me with an offer to exchange the program disk for me...he had a new one in his car. I took him up on this offer and eagerly returned home to try the new disk. To my dismay, it too failed to allow me to have more than one font used in the body of a certificate. I was now sure that I was doing something quite wrong. I decided to call Springboard's technical help line the next day and put the problem to

rest once and for all.

My call to technical support turned out to be most unsatisfactory!

After a rather lengthy explanation of the problem, I was told that the ATARI version of the program did not, in fact, support multiple fonts. I asked why the documentation, which specifically said was for the ATARI, did not correctly detail the operation of the program. I was told that it was a typo...even though the references to the procedure to use multiple fonts appeared numerous times in the doc. I was told that there would probably be no updates to the doc correcting this oversight and that the program would probably never be updated to supply all of the features on the ATARI that it does on other machines.

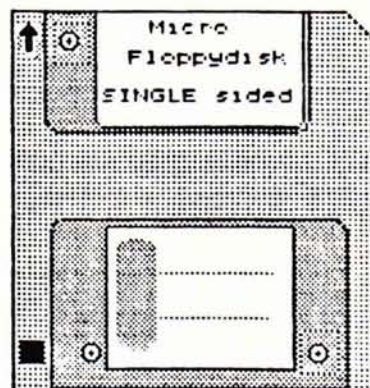
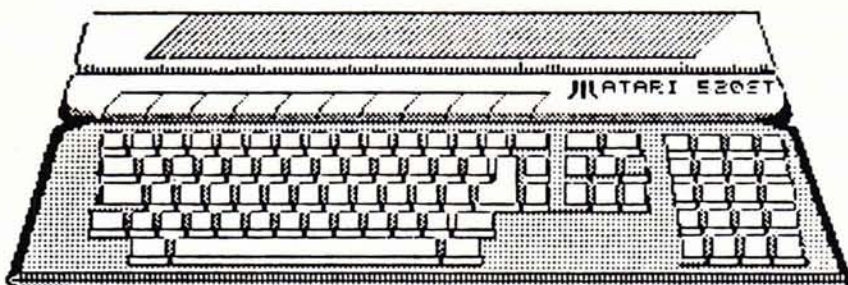
I was not very satisfied by the

response of Springboard to my inquiry. The advertisements and documentation for Certificate Maker are deceptive as to this desirable feature.

Let me say that I do still like the program. I just wanted to explain this interchange with this particular software publisher in order to remind you that things are not always what they seem and that some software publishers support ATARI better than others.

Rhett Bryson

ST NEWS



NEW RELEASES FROM MichTron

I received in the mail yesterday a catalog from MichTron advertising the software releases they had for the ATARI ST. Among the 45 titles for the ST by this most prolific of software developers were several new releases seemed especially exciting.

Several months ago, I bought GFA BASIC from MichTron. I have been completely satisfied with it. MichTron now has several utilities and support programs to go along with the BASIC. A brief summary:

1. GFA BASIC Compiler. A fast 2-pass Compiler which converts your programs into fast-running machine-language .PRG files.

2. GFA Companion. A new RCS editor that creates custom dialog boxes for use in your

BASIC programs.

3. ST Replay. A new program that will allow you to digitize sounds and music which can be put into your GFA BASIC programs.

4. Knovice. An artificial intelligence program that works in conjunction with your GFA BASIC programs.

5. GFA Vector. Allows you to create and manipulate astounding images, optical effects then place them in your GFA BASIC programs.

6. GFA Object. A 3-D drawing program which allows you to create stunning objects for use with your GFA BASIC programs, or for use with GFA Vector.

7. Easy Record. A sophisticated B-Tree record storage management system within your GFA BASIC programs.

8. PROG. A data base language that works with GFA BASIC making it easy for you to get information from a

data base.

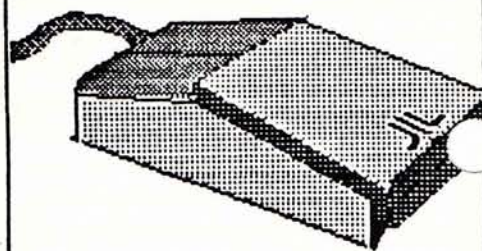
With GFA BASIC only being on the market a short time, this is a phenomenal support for a BASIC language.

Upcoming releases which should quicken the pulse of some of you include:

1. Easy Page. Claimed to be the "...easiest page layout system in the world!" They say it will do practically everything the bigger, complicated, more expensive programs do, but is much easier to use.

2. GFA Draft Plus. A 2-S CAD program that is claimed to be "...equal to anything running on the IBM, at a fraction of the price."

CONTINUED ON THE
NEXT PAGE..-



New Releases from MichTron continued.

3. GFA Film. A fantastic graphic program that lets you do all kinds of special effects.

4. Weide Math Coprocessor. A math coprocessor board that fits into the 520ST and the 1040ST. This board allows you to use a new version of GFA BASIC called GFA Float which gives you the speed of the math coprocessor.

5. GFA Object. An object manipulation program that lets you draw 3-D objects. You can Merge, Size, Rotate, Stretch, just to name a few of the features. The objects can be exported to be used by GFA BASIC, Vector, Draft Plus, and even DEGAS.

6. GFA Publisher. The ultimate page layout program, that will be "...the Cadillac of page layout programs."

7. Realtizer. A new utility that allows you to

digitize images from a video camera or video cassette recorder! There is a variety of grey level support with 4 speeds of scanning.

The pictures can be save in numerous formats. You can even make color images with the included three filters. There are built-in printer drivers which allow you to adjust print-outs to fit your needs.

Even though many of these programs are not yet released, MichTron is a company that has a history of delivering everything they promise. I have always found programs from MichTron to be of high quality and most useful. Many of the new releases are from GFA in Germany. Look for reviews and further information on these programs in the magazines and on the electronic bulletin boards. It looks like MichTron will continue to be a major supporter of the ST!

Rhett Bryson



SCANNING CURRENT NOTES

The latest issue (July-August) of Current Notes brings it's usual share of news, scuttlebutt, rumor and news concerning the ATARI ST.

A company in Tucson, AZ offers three hardware accessories for the ST. They have a Monitor Master for \$49.99 to allow those ST owners who have both monitors to switch back and forth without having to grope behind their computers and switch cables. It has separate audio jack hookups that allow your sending audio to your amplifiers. It also brings out composite video on 520's

**CURRENT NOTES
CONTINUED...**

with RF modulators.

They offer a RGB Video cable to allow hook-up to non-ATARI monitors. It is 4 ft. long and contains composite leads. It sells for \$21.99. Also in the cable department, they offer a Composite Video Cable for \$14.99 which features molded ends and low loss video coax.

News is still spotty about the availability of the long promised "Blitter" chip. Still no firm word on delivery dates.

Happy Computer will produce a floppy interface for the ST that will format and operate 3.5", 5.25", and 8" drive in native Mac, IBM, and other formats as well as perform the usual job of back-up.

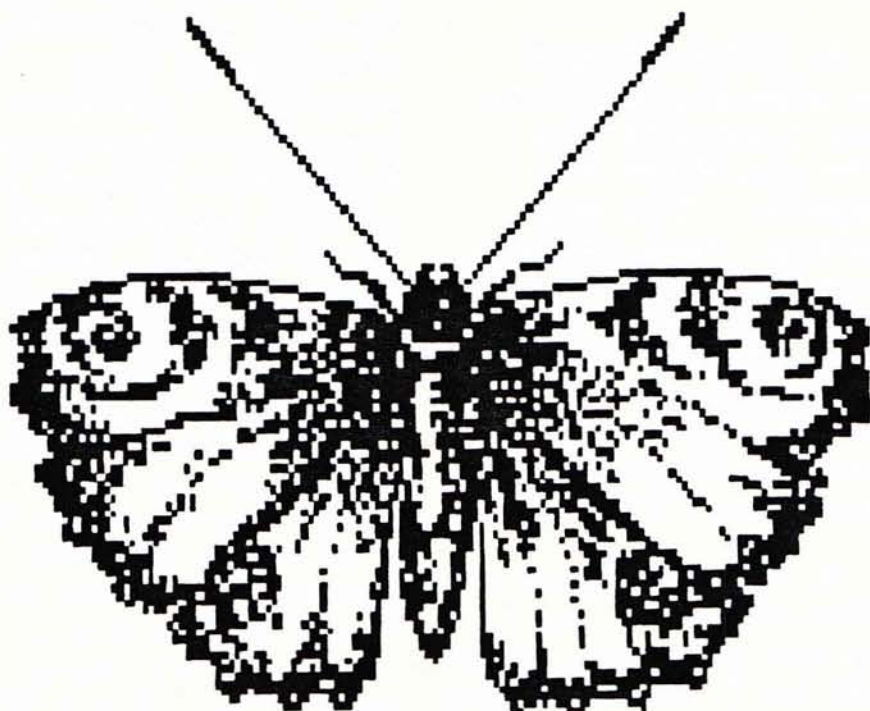
Coming soon will be a Mega-ST case for those of you with a 520. All you have to do is remove your 520 mother board and install it in a new thin-line box. It moves all serial, parallel, DMA, disk drive, and monitor connections to

the box to unclutter your keyboard. It also gives ample room for 4-meg boards, blitter and other add-ons. The deluxe version has built-in fan, power supply, and a set of AC switches on the front panel like a master control panel -- spike, surge, and noise protection also present. You must also buy a new slim-line keyboard with the modular telephone type plug. Could be neat!

RHETT BRYSON

**HELP
G.R.A.C.E.**

**WRITE
FOR
THE
NEWS
LETTER !-**



8-BIT LIBRARY NEWS

And how has your summer been?

This month's disk-of-the-month will be a 2-sided disk. On side one will be the following programs:

1. College Football Analysis - A neat program that will allow you to input scores from games and predict most likely winner of next week's matchup. A very unusual program. It will be interesting how well this program is able to predict winners! This program is comprised of the following:
 - a. RUN.SYS - should be .BINary loaded from DOS.
 - b. AUTORUN.CTB - the main program (written in compiled Turbo Basic.
 - c. CFANALYS.DOC - the .DOC file.
 - d. CURRENT.CFA - use to keep track of weekly scores/stats.
 - e. PRE87.CFA - reference file of pre-season ratings.
2. DETECT20 - A BASIC program that will check any file on a disk and tell you what storage method it is stored in: ARCed, SCRUNCHED, etc.
3. READARC - A BASIC program that will display the contents of an .ARCed file without having to actually run the ARCX extractor program!
4. QUIKMENUE.BIN - A .BINary load program that will create a game-loader menu on a disk. Does not need to have DOS/DUP on disk, just a formatted disk to write the loader too. Then .BINary or ML games can be copied to the disk.

Side 2 of the DOM will have a super disk utility program called Disk Master on it.

Associated .DOC file also included.

Hope to see you at the meeting!

George Nelson,
8-Bit Librarian

'FIRST TIME JITTERS!'

I have now been a member of GRace for almost one year! And I fully believe that I have been able to enjoy the use of my computer 500% more than if I had never join, but that is not the reason why I am writing this article, exactly! I'm writing to make the point that there is always a time for firsts in everyone's life!

From the time one is born there are always first, your first day of life, your first birthday, your first day of school, and many more. Well, I did a first at the June meeting, I did a review of a piece of software that I own. Needless to say I was nervous at first, because I knew that most of the people there knew more about computer technology in there little finger than what I know in my whole body. But, then I said to myself why not at least try to add to there knowledge as well as my own. I felt this is a user group not a torture chamber and the worst that could happen is that I might submit some information that someone didn't know and in turn learn something myself.

→

Well, I'm still alive from my ordeal and you know something I did learn something from my experience. And right now by writing this article I'm doing another first, I'm writing a news letter for the GRace Newsletter! Folk's isn't this what it's all about! You never get anymore out of something than what you put into it! So for those of you who hav'nt done so already, get involved with GRace, write a newsletter or review a piece of software, you'll find it enjoyable and informative!

--Ray Byrd--

P.S.- A message to those who haven't been to a meeting in a long time, you're missing a lot of GREAT FIRST!

A FINANCIAL WIZARD

Do you dread the arrival of the bank statement? Do you know it will never balance to the penny? Ever wonder how much you really spent for gas for the family car? Food? Electricity?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you are ready to use that "game machine" for what it really good at. Number crunching is what I'm talking about. If you have a 48K Atari, Basic, and a disk drive or two you can find the answer to these and many other questions about where all the money you make is going to.

A Financial Wizard is a disk of programs that are completely compatible with each other and can finally give you a handle on your finances and what happened to them.

You start by figuring out where the money needs to go with the Budget program. This allows you to know if you are spending more than what you had really wanted for clothes or any other catagory. Did I mention you can have 22 major catagories for expenses and 1 for income. Each catagories can have up to 36 sub-catagories. There are even 3 major catagories for record keeping that doesn't affect your checkbook balance (i.e. kilowatt usage).

The real workhorse is Check Entry. With it you enter all your checks, ATM transactions, and deposits. This is where you really set up the rest of the programs to answer your questions and balance your checkbook, right to the penny if you are accurate and in about 20 minutes or so. It is a very forgiving about mistakes and will not let you put a date like July 45 for example. There is error checking where it is possible. After you have entered your checks you can make use of the other programs on the disk.

There is Check Search to find out how much your wife spent on clothes this year. Or you can find out how much your tax deductible donations were at tax time without having to go through the shoe box counting slips of paper.

Tabulations and Bar Graph will let you compare what you spent compared with what you budgeted for and will even give you a hard copy to show the wife who says she only spent \$30 on clothes.

Checkwriter will print your checks if you get preprinted checks. Won't your creditors be surprised when they get those fancy printed checks and begin wondering how you got so far up the social ladder.

Finally, there is Checkbook Balancer. It makes that task that almost everyone cringes about, everyone that doesn't have Financial Wizard, easy as pie. This program takes the info entered with Check Entry and your bank statement and voilla a balanced statement. Like I said in about 20 minutes you can be back watching reruns of Facts of Life. And you said nobody balances their checkbook except by accident.

The whole package is well documented and comes in a hard plastic case that is good for storing. I rate this a 9 (don't believe in 10's) for everything from ease of use to price (around \$30 I don't remember exactly).

GEORGE MARIN

**THANKS FOR THE
ARTICLES!**

EDITOR

THE X10 POWERHOUSE

If I told you that you could purchase a device that, when connected to your computer, would control 256 discrete devices or an unlimited number of non-discrete devices for under \$30.00, would you be interested? Well, such a device has existed for some time! It is completely wireless and can control almost anything one can imagine, from lights to appliances, even the heat in your home!

The device I'm speaking of is the X10 POWERHOUSE. This thing is amazing! It has a real-time clock, day counter, programmable RAM and battery backup. To use the X10 you'll need an 850, an R-VERTER or the P-R CONNECTION. I prefer the latter for two reasons: 1) it's compatible with most programs that are set up for the 850; 2) its price: \$59.00! With the P-R CONNECTION, if you don't have a printer interface, for a few more dollars than one costs, you also get two RS-232 ports. If you already have an interface, then for about 2/3 of what an 850 costs, you can have RS-232 capability.

First of all, the X10 comes with IBM software or no software, but does come with an extensive programmer's guide. Using only this guide, I was able to program the X10 to control everything in the house I wanted to. (Including my wife!!....just kidding!) The X10 sends signals through the wiring in your home to modules that are either plugged into outlets or ones that replace existing switches and outlets. The types of modules available are: Lamp(300 Watts

incandescent), 2 & 3 prong Appliance(15A resistive, 1/3HP motor, 500W incandescent or 400W TV), single and 3-way wall switches, wall outlet and thermostat.

The first three modules listed plug into existing outlets and the item you wish to control plugs into the module. I know nothing about the thermostat -only that it is available. Each module has two codes that you select to determine which of the 256 combinations will operate that module: house codes from A-F and module numbers from 1-16 (16 house codes times 16 module codes = 256 different codes). From the X10 you select a housecode and module number that you want to control, then you select the mode -normal or security.

Security will turn the selected module(s) on or off within an hour of the time you set, never at the same time as the day before. Next, select what day(s) you want (weekday, weekend, today, tomorrow, or specific days). Then the time is selected in the form HH:MM AM or PM. Next, the operation-on, off or dim. When dim is chosen, there are 16 intensities to choose from, 1 being dim and 16 being bright.

There are some limitations: the X10 can only store 128 events. An event is one or more modules with the same house code being dimmed, turn on or off. If you had house code "B", modules 1-16 on at 6:00 A.M., that would equal one event. If you chose house codes "B" and "C" module 1 on at 6:00 A.M., that would equal two events. If you change

house codes or the operation time, or the operation, then you add events.

Once you have programmed the X10, it can be disconnected from the computer, unplugged from the wall, taken into a closet, plugged back in and it will continue with the correct time and all of the events stored in its memory. We come home to a softly lit drive and house each night, get into a warm bed in the winter and get up to warm lighting and fresh coffee each morning. Ah...What my Atari won't do...and it didn't cost thousands!!!

The X10 computer controller can be purchased at Radio Shack. The modules can be purchased at Sears, Radio Shack and through some mail order companies. Modules run from \$10.00 to \$20.00.

I think the X10 is one of the most satisfying computer accessories purchase you will make. It is not something you buy, use for a while and discard. It is something that gets used day in and day out!

The software I have will be made available to all, for the cost of a disk.

RON MOORE

MAJOR PROBLEMS WITH BBS

The Sysop has informed me that the GrACE BBS is down until he can determine the problem!!

editor

IBM COMPATIBILITY SOFTWARE

Programs for the IBM PC and compatible systems can run on the Atari 520ST and 1040ST systems with help of **PC DITTO**, an emulation software program from Advent-Garde Systems.

The program supports most popular DOS programs including Lotus 1-2-3 and Symphony, Word Perfect, Desq-view, Framework, Dbase III Plus, and others with no additional hardware or coprocessors. The program runs software at 80 per cent of the speed of an IBM PC XT. The reason is that this emulator is software rather than hardware based.

It provides 1040ST users with up to 703K of usable DOS memory, and 520ST users with 384K of usable RAM. It imitates MDA and CGA graphics modes and users can boot DOS from a hard disk.

PC DITTO also fully emulates serial and parallel ports and supports 3.5 inch 720K disk drives and optional 5.25 inch 360K drives for the Atari. The emulation program is provided on 3.5 inch media.

However, the first version only works on the color system and does not support GEM or the mouse. The list price of \$89.95 includes the program's first upgrade, due this fall, which will support monochrome systems as well as the mouse and MIDI ports.

PC DITTO is available from our friend, Bob Ehlers at Concurrent Technologies or from Advent-Garde Systems, 381 Pablo Point Drive, Jacksonville, Florida 32225, (904)221-2904.

Al Tompkins

NEWS FROM SENECA!

This month Royce Ridings has contributed a VIP worksheet (AMOR30.WKS) that (you guessed it) calculates loan amortization schedules for up to 30 years. Royce welcomes others to make changes and additions. He will be happy to discuss this worksheet with anyone who is interested.

A copy of the worksheet will be placed into the ST library.

Nice work Royce!!

Editor

conversations

I have been waiting for ST TALK PROFESSIONAL to appear for about three months. I am still waiting!

I decided that since the only response I get when I ask about it is "it's not been released yet (jerk)." (emphasis added). Therefore, I decided to go straight to the horse's mouth and call QMI (Quantum Microsystems Inc.). I got to talk to the 'head-man' himself, John DeMar, President of QMI.

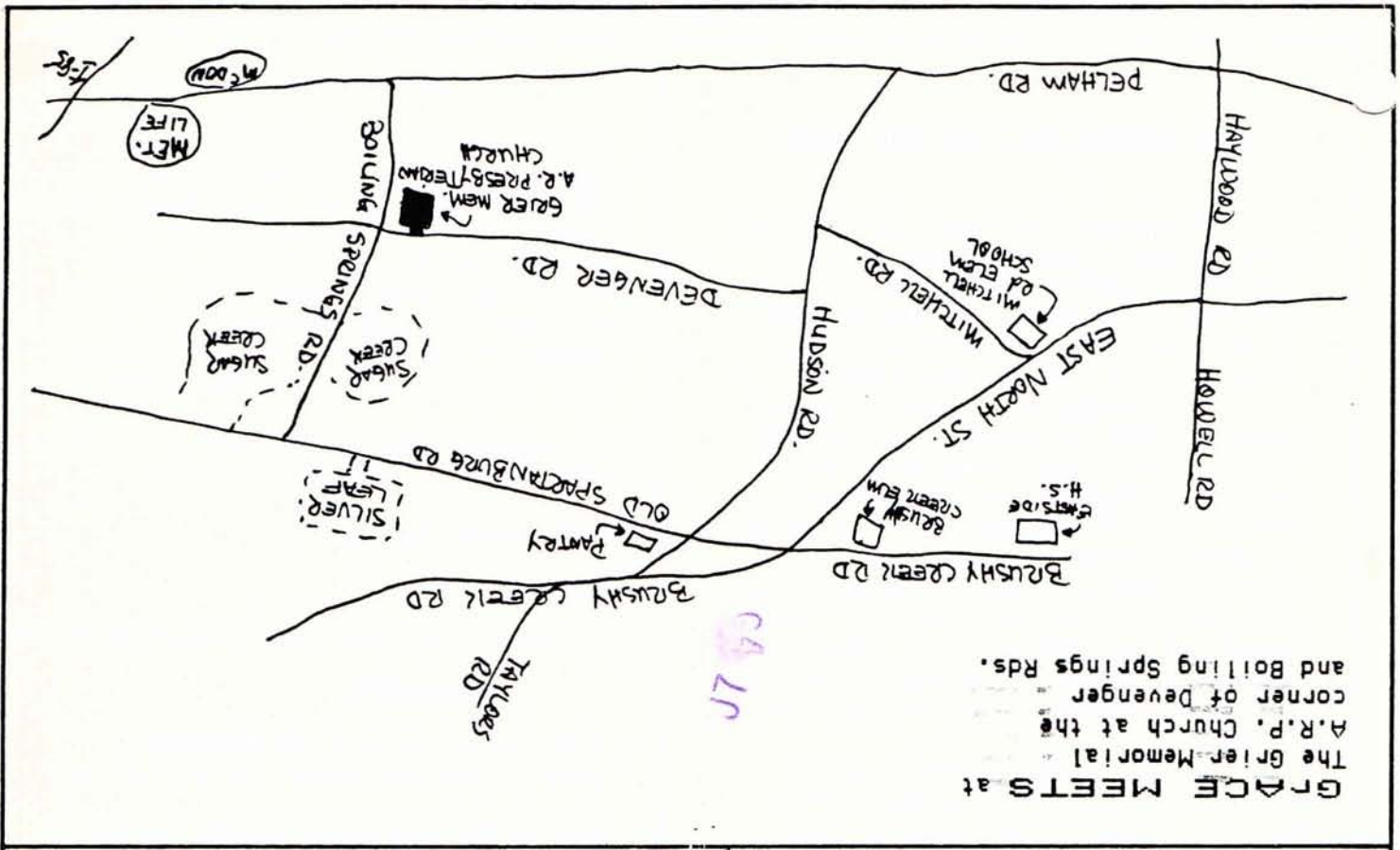
He told me that ST TALK PROFESSIONAL was about six weeks away from introduction (I'm going to try to buy directly from QMI in the hopes of getting it as quickly as possible-- also do a review for the newsletter). Mr. DeMar told me of some of the new products that QMI has or is ready to introduce. Mr. DeMar has sent me a flyer describing the products that I will bring to the meeting. The products mentioned were:

1. DESKCARD- cartridge based accessory
2. BB/ST- bulletin board system for the ST
3. DO IT!- a ms dos shell
4. GRAPHICS TABLETS/SOFTWARE- the tablets are 9x12 (\$395) and 12x18 (\$695) with driver software

I must say that Mr. DeMar was very courteous and very willing to talk about QMI's product line. I wish QMI and Mr. DeMar all the success.

From what Mr. DeMar told me about ST TALK PROFESSIONAL, it sounds great.

Ed Culbertson
Editor



GrACE NEWS

% ED CULBERTSON
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